



Center for the Study of
Healthcare Provider Behavior

Sepulveda

Center of Excellence

Director: Lisa V. Rubenstein, MD, MSPH

Executive Summary for Fiscal Year 2008

The Center's primary continuing objective is to promote better health and healthcare for veterans by gathering research evidence about healthcare provider behavior and organizational characteristics of health care systems, and translating such research evidence into practice. We study the factors that influence healthcare provider behavior, and design health systems interventions to improve provider practice. Our studies cover a range of healthcare improvement goals through the development and application of theories and evidence about how to change provider behavior and implement and evaluate care models.

Investigators: Currently, the Center has 29 core investigators and 13 affiliate investigators representing the West LA and Sepulveda VA campuses, as well as UCLA and RAND. Investigators bring expertise from general and subspecialty medicine, biostatistics, health care epidemiology, management and policy, public health, behavioral science, pharmacology, sociology, education, psychology, genetics, law and business. Affiliate investigators represent our center partners (GRECC, MIRECC, PADRECC, CURE) and consortia at UCLA and RAND.

Center Funding: Overall, the center has leveraged the core allocation more than 14-fold, with a portfolio totaling just over \$10 million. We have seen modest decreases in our HSR&D funding and QUERI research, chiefly from ReTIDES and the palliative care trial, two of our largest studies, drawing to a close, and a small increase in career development funding.

Research Projects: The Center emphasizes observational, intervention and implementation research studies related to provider behavior, quality improvement, collaborative care models, and assessments of VA structure and processes related to quality. This year, we added the pioneering field of health services genomics as a new area of emphasis. This year has also seen the culmination of a series of nationally recognized studies on the implementation and spread of collaborative care for depression, and continued work on schizophrenia, in addition to VISN-level implementation studies of HIV testing and telephone counseling for smoking cessation. Our women veterans' research continues to grow, with the launch of the National Survey of Women Veterans and an updated systematic review, in addition to new knowledge about the organizational factors associated with their quality of care.

Research Products and Dissemination: Center investigators published 74 peer-reviewed manuscripts this year, and delivered 56 conference presentations, including a number of briefings to VA senior leaders and managers. The Center also continues to disseminate a variety of evidence reports, monographs, and intervention resource guides through traditional and web-based means.

National and Regional Leadership Roles: Center investigators contribute to practice and policy development through numerous leadership roles. We have made particularly strong contributions to VA Central Office and through professional societies this year. For example, Dr. Yano serves on the Under Secretary's Women's Health Models Workgroup, which is using evidence from her studies to redesign VA women's primary care delivery, while Dr. Soban (CDA-2 awardee) is on the VA Central Office Pressure Ulcer Workgroup. Dr. Rubenstein is now President of the Society for General Internal Medicine (SGIM), where she is leading national primary care policy development, while Dr. Washington is on the SGIM Council.

Training Activities: Our training program builds on the expertise within the Center as well as affiliated institutions to provide trainees a broad array of coursework opportunities and mentoring for the study of provider behavior and implementation research. Overall, we trained 16 VA Health Services Research, Women's Health and Associated Health Postdoctoral Fellows and VA Clinical Scholars this year. We offered a VA-based seminar series and UCLA course entitled "Introduction to the Science of Implementing Evidence-based Practice," which will become the foundation for a planned cognate for doctoral students. We continue to train local as well as other Centers' researchers, who participate in monthly career development calls and organizational theory journal club.

Future Plans: Future Plans We will continue to evaluate our management infrastructure and strategic program areas, working on team building and professional development. We anticipate investing time and resources in accelerating the operationalization of our system interventions and organizational research findings into evidence-based solutions for VA managers and providers. We also anticipate rapid growth of our new health services genomics Strategic Program Area.